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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ZAGREB 002007

SIPDIS

VIENNA ALSO FOR BOSNIA; USVIENNA ALSO FOR USDEL CSCE

BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEU

E.O. 12356: 5/24/00

TAGS:

SUBJECT: WESTERN SLAVONIA: INFORMATION GAP, PART I
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SUMMARY AND COMMENT

¶1. (C) A RECENT GOVERNMENT REPORT PROVIDED SOME LONG-AWAITED STATISTICS ON DETAINEES, KIA, AND CIVILIANS FROM THE MAY 1-2 SECTOR WEST BATTLES. IT APPEARS, HOWEVER, STILL TO LEAVE OPEN QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND FOR THE AREA'S SERB POPULATION. THE MAIN CASUALTY OF THE GOC'S INADEQUATE AND UNTIMELY EFFORTS TO PROVIDE NUMBERS ON CASUALTIES AND REFUGEES IS THUS, IRONICALLY, ITS OWN CREDIBILITY.
END SUMMARYCOMMENT.

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GOC ISSUES A STATISTICAL REPORT

¶2. (U) ON MAY 22, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER KOSTOVIC RELEASED A STATEMENT CONTAINING STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON PEOPLE IN SECTOR WEST AFFECTED BY THE MAY 1-2 WAR THERE. THE RELEASE OFFERS THE FOLLOWING DATA:

-- A "CENSUS" TAKEN APPARENTLY ON MAY 4 SHOWED 2922 CIVILIANS REMAINING AROUND PAKRAC AND ABOUT 500 TOTAL IN OKUCANI, STARA GRADISKA, AND JASENOVAC.

-- BETWEEN MAY 8 AND 19, 1719 PEOPLE LEFT AND WENT TO B-H. 6-7000 CIVILIANS WERE ESTIMATED TO HAVE FLED THE AREA AHEAD OF THE ADVANCING TROOPS.
OF THE REMAINING
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SERB POPULATION, 675 HAVE BEEN GRANTED CROATIAN CITIZENSHIP CERTIFICATES; 1070 HAVE APPLIED FOR SUCH CERTIFICATES.

-- 188 BODIES WERE FOUND AFTER THE FIGHTING. 127 OF THESE HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED. 20 IDENTIFIED AS CIVILIANS WERE KILLED "IN CROSSFIRE CAUSED BY PARAMILITARY UNITS," AS WERE ANOTHER 34 WHO "ARE ASSUMED POSSIBLY NOT TO HAVE BEEN MEMBERS OF PARAMILITARY UNITS." THESE BODIES WERE BURIED "IN SEVERAL GRAVES" BY RELEVANT AUTHORITIES; RELATIVES MAY MAKE INDIVIDUAL INQUIRIES TO THE CROATIAN RED CROSS.

-- 1494 "MILITARILY CAPABLE" MEN WERE PROCESSED IN "RECEPTION CENTERS." 917 OF THESE WERE RELEASED WITHOUT INITIATION OF INVESTIGATORY PROCESS. OF THE REMAINDER WHO WERE INVESTIGATED, 188 ARE STILL BEING HELD IN "INVESTIGATION CENTERS."

DATA LEAVES MANY OPEN QUESTIONS

¶3. (LOU) THE GOVERNMENT'S "REPORT" AT LEAST DEFINES THE PARAMETERS, BUT IT LEAVES OPEN AS MANY QUESTIONS AS IT ANSWERS. WE NOTE THE FOLLOWING SHORTCOMINGS:
-- NO FIGURE IS PROVIDED FOR WOUNDED-IN-ACTION.

-- IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE HOW MANY CIVILIANS REMAIN IN THE AREA, AS THE TOTAL ATTRIBUTED TO A MAY 4 RED CROSS CENSUS (3422) CANNOT BE SQUARED WITH THE
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(APPARENTLY LATER) CUMULATIVE FIGURES FOR THOSE WHO
LEFT (1719) AND THOSE WHO REMAIN (POSSIBLY 1745).

-- THE FIGURES ON DETAINEES LEAVE AN ADDITIONAL 391
PERSONS UNACCOUNTED FOR.

¶4. (C) IN A CONVERSATION MAY 23 WITH ASSISTANT
MINISTER OF INTERIOR FOR POLICE JOSKO MORIC, POLOFFS
(WHO AT THE TIME HAD ONLY PRESS ACCOUNTS OF THE
"REPORT") ASKED MORIC ABOUT THE LAST DISCREPANCY
ESPECIALLY. HE CLAIMED THE MATTER WAS PROBABLY UNCLEAR
"BECAUSE OF INCOMPLETE MEDIA TRANSCRIPTION" (COMMENT:
ON OUR RETURN TO ZAGREB WE FOUND THE PRESS ACCOUNT WAS
A FULL RENDERING OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PRESS RELEASE, AND
NO MORE COMPLETE REPORT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THE UN.)
MORIC SAID THE NUMBER NOT ACCOUNTED FOR REPRESENTED
PERSONS NOT CHARGED WITH WAR CRIMES BUT OTHER "NORMAL"
CRIMES SUCH AS THEFT. (COMMENT: IF SO, THIS WOULD
VIOLATE THE SPIRIT AND LETTER OF THE GOC'S AGREEMENT
WITH THE UN.)

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ACTION EUR-01

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	OASY-00	DODE-00	EB-01
	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-08	L-01	ADS-00	M-00
	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-01	PM-00	PRS-01
	P-01	SCT-00	SP-00	SS-00	STR-01	TRSE-00	T-00
	USIE-00	PMB-00	PRME-01	DRL-09	G-00		/029W

----- C8F704 241545Z /38

P 241636Z MAY 95
FM AMEMBASSY ZAGREB
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5900
INFO NATO EU COLLECTIVE
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMCONSUL MUNICH
USLO SKOPJE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY LJUBLJANA

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CREDIBILITY IS A PROBLEM

15. (C) IN ADDITION TO THE DISAPPOINTING INCOMPLETENESS OF THE REPORT, ITS TONE AND OMISSIONS ALSO CALL INTO QUESTION ITS CREDIBILITY. SP ECIFIC POINTS:

-- MORIC ALSO CLAIMED FULL REPORTS, INCLUDING LISTS OF THE NAMES OF DEAD, DETAINEES, AND OTHERS, HAD BEEN PROVIDED TO THE ICRC AND UN. WE FOUND, HOWEVER, THAT AS OF MIDDAY MAY 23, NEITHER ICRC NOR UN OFFICIALS IN WESTERN SLAVONIA OR ZAGREB HAD ANYTHING BUT THE PRESS RELEASE SUMMARIZED ABOVE. (ICRC PEOPLE MAKING THE ROUNDS OF KEY SERBS IN PAKRAC AREA MAY 23 HAD ONLY THE LIST THAT THE HEAD OF THE BJELOVAR DETENTION CENTER HAD GIVEN U.S. POLOFFS MAY 18).

-- THE GOVERNMENT HAS MADE NO ATTEMPT TO RECONCILE THE NUMBER OF KIA (188) IN THIS REPORT WITH THE MUCH LARGER NUMBER (450) CITED A WEEK AGO BY DEFMIN SUSAK. ALTHOUGH SUSAK'S STAFF TOLD DATT HE PULLED THAT FIGURE OUT OF THIN AIR, IT IS IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN AND OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. (WESTERN SLAVONIA SERB LEADER VELJKO DZAKULA, TO WHOM WE SHOWED THE NEWSPAPER ACCOUNT OF THE REPORT, PICKED UP IMMEDIATELY ON THIS DISCREPANCY, OFFERING IT AS EVIDENCE THAT THE GOC WAS HIDING SOMETHING.)

-- THE GOC ATTEMPTS TO BLAME ALL THE CIVILIAN DEATHS ON CONFIDENTIAL

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"PARAMILITARY UNITS," I.E., THE SERBS.

-- THE REFERENCE TO BURIAL OF THE DEAD IN "SEVERAL GRAVES" MAY -- OR MAY NOT -- EXPLAIN RECENT PRESS REPORTS OF "MASS GRAVES" IN OKUCANI AND ELSEWHERE. BUT IT IS NOT CLEAR WHY THESE BODIES WOULD HAVE BEEN BURIED IN MASS GRAVES, OR WHY (APPARENTLY) SOME UNIDENTIFIED BODIES WERE BURIED.

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